Concept of Science Channel

2588. SHRIMATI S.G. INDIRA: Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the very concept of a Science Channel is now under reconsideration;

(b) whether it is also a fact that Government are considering to handover the Science Channel's operations to a private party;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) whether it is also a fact that the DECU-Vigyan Prasar Combine would not be able to deliver the goods?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (SHRI KAPIL SIBAL): (a) No, Sir. The concept of science channel is under active consideration.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) No, Sir. Development and Educational Communication Unit(DECU)/ Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and Vigyan Prasar (VP) will produce the programmes and capsule them for transmission. Programmes would be produced both in-house and also be outsourced to suitable agencies.

Setting up of Science Research Foundation

2589. SHRIMATI S.G. INDIRA: Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government had decided to set up **a** science research foundation at cost of Rs. 1000 Crores;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is also a fact that the proposed research foundation would be an autonomous organisation; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (SHRI KAPIL SIBAL): (a) to (d) A proposal has been made by the Scientific Advisory Council to the Prime Minister for setting up an autonomous Science and Engineering Research Foundation. The details are being worked out.

Export of Bio-Diversity Products

2590. SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY SIRIGIREDDY: Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the steps Government are taking to convert bio-diversity resources into value-added products for use in domestic requirements and also for exports; and

(b) the total amount of herbs, germ plasm and micro-organisms exported by India during the last 3 years; year-wise and country-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (SHRI KAPIL SIBAL): (a) Some Central Ministries/ Departments/Institutes are supporting research programmes for converting biodiversity resources into value-added products for use in domestic requirements and also for exports. The Department of Biotechnology (DBT) has sponsored various research and development projects for developing different value added products such as herbal drugs, natural dyes, enzymes, biomolecules, biopesticides, biofertilizer and immobilized microbial consortia for degradation of oily sludge etc. The National Bioresource Development Board (NBDB) has been set up mainly for development and sustainable utilization of bioresoruces especially for the development of new products and processes through biotechnological interventions. The DBT has recently established an autonomous institute namely Institute of Bicresources and Sustainable Development (IBSD) at Imphal, Manipur. This Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) has a network programme on "Discovery of new bioactive molecules" where many national labs/universities are involved in collecting micro-organisms from different ecological niches, making extracts and screening the same against targets. These micro-organisms are preserved in Microbial Type Culture collections at IMTECH, Chandigarh for future use.

(b) Based on the available data, the total amount of herbs (such as Psyllium husk and seeds, opium poppy seeds, senna leaves & pods and